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RUEHMIL/AMCONSUL MILAN PRIORITY 9183
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RUEHNP/AMCONSUL NAPLES PRIORITY 2989
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY 4591
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0829
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2910
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SUBJECT: ITALY BRIEFED ON TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR UN SENIOR
CIVILIAN FOR AFGHANISTAN

REF: STATE 1001

¶1. (SBU) Poloff delivered reftel demarche to Italian MFA Coordinator for Afghanistan Sergio Mercuri on January 7. Mercuri appreciated the opportunity to review the latest version of the terms of reference/job description and was pleased to find that the Senior Civilian Representative would have the explicit authority to engage, not just with major donors, but also with Afghanistan's neighbors in the region. He agreed that Lord Ashdown has the personal authority and energy needed to tackle the important task of donor coordination.

¶2. (SBU) With regard to point 3 of the terms of reference (lead authority for the Afghanistan Compact/co-chair JCMB), Mercuri hoped that this function would allow donors and the Afghan government to conduct a review of the Compact which Italy believes is overdue. He also reiterated the Italian position that the next donor conference on Afghanistan should include a review of the benchmarks and time frames of the Compact with a view toward focusing the energies of the donor community and the Afghan government. Contrary to public intimations made by FM D'Alema in the past, Mercuri said that Italy is not interested in hosting such a conference, but would welcome the opportunity to collaborate on setting the conference agenda.
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